

9 Steps to Sales Excellence

Although every business knows it needs to focus on sales in order to survive and prosper, many companies are at a loss in terms of how to get their sales rolling and how to develop a sales apparatus that reaches excellence. Many companies believe that they only need to produce a great product and the sales will come, and others believe that the product is only as good as the marketing behind it. While there are examples where both theories can be proven – and negated – the simple truth behind sales excellence is that it demands discipline, commitment, and resources. If you are willing to undergo the process from which great sales result you can reach sales greatness. And if you seek to cut corners, your sales results will fall short. So what is the process that delivers when it comes to sales? Tudog has 9 steps we'd like to share.

Step One: Soul Search

You may know where you want to go, but you will not know how to get there if you do not engage in an honest appraisal of where you currently are. This appraisal needs to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the sales effort and determine how the weaknesses can be strengthened and the strengths better leveraged.

Step Two: Improve Your HR

Starting with managers, your human resources need to be the best they can. Sometimes we get attached to mediocre salespeople who have experience with our products or history with our company. While we commend the sentimentality, it is not well placed. You are doing no one a favor keeping on people who cannot perform with excellence when it is excellence that you seek to obtain. First get rid of managers who are less than great, and then replace them with great managers. Once they are in place, they will make certain that their standards are adhered to by all members of the sales team.

Step Three: Evaluate Your Sales Process

The way you generate leads, make presentations, follow up on meetings, and recognize and take advantage of sales opportunities are all functions of the sales processes you have in place. In the absence of an formal sales process, your informal process is still taking on the role of engaging in these critical functions. Whether formal or not, your sales processes need to be structured and embedded with the qualities and tools that enable your team to reach excellence.

Step Four: Position Your Company Wisely

There are some marketing gurus that maintain that it all boils down to positioning, and while Tudog doesn't place as much importance on it (as we believe that there are other factors that also comprise a successful marketing infrastructure), we surely recognize that positioning your company well plays a central role in the success of your sales activity. Positioning is not only a question of market, branding, and price, it is also reliant on issues of consistency and how your team presents it. The position of your company is eroded if your sales force is not loyal to it, and their loyalty is bought through their confidence in the position and their faith in its truthfulness.

Step Five: Cultivate a Culture of Success

While every failure needs to be analyzed and the root causes need to be understood and corrected, the way you go about learning from your mistakes will strongly influence how anxious your team members will be to acknowledge their errors. A culture of success is one that explores failure openly with an eye toward the next victory. It is a culture of celebration when victories – large and small – are accomplished. It is an environment of openness and sharing, so that everyone learns together and no one is left feeling as if their failure is theirs alone. A culture of success breeds success.

Step Six: Coordinate Your Infrastructure

Successful sales are also a function of how well your company performs once the sales are rolling in. Sustainable sales require the proper and expert fulfillment of the orders you place. This happens when the infrastructure for fulfillment is coordinated with the sales department. You need to make sure that your customers are happy so that they remain your customers.

Step Seven: Standardize Your Execution

Nothing damages a sales effort than inconstant performance by the various members of your sales team. It is true that some people are simply better at sales than others and there is little you can do about the natural differences in people. That said, there is plenty you can do when it comes to training your sales team members and providing them with the answers to questions and behavioral responses to anticipated scenarios. The unity in response you will get will not only make certain that all your customers are receiving the same answers and quality of attention, but also will allow you to be flexible with your sales force, secure in your knowledge that every person on your team can handle any appointment.

Step Eight: Automate Your Systems

Once you have your processes in place and your people up to par, it is important that you leverage whatever technologies are available to automate the order processes, the lead generation processes, and the customer relations processes. These automations will provide you with a unified quality of care, allow you to deliver higher levels of service, and create valuable customer history and data base records for you to utilize when growing your per customer sales volume.

Step Nine: Institutionalize Feedback

The last step in sales excellence is making certain that you always have access to your customers' opinions and feelings regarding your company, your sales team, your products and your services. By including feedback into your program as a standard component you will benefit from the knowledge that can only come from a customer's perspective.

Sales excellence is an ambitious goal, but also an imperative for companies that seek to grow and sustain that growth over time. Reaching sales excellence is not an impossibility, it's only a process. Be true to the process and excellence shall be yours.